

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Kinder/Early Years

Finding good times for chit chat time

Talking to our children is one of the most important things we will ever do for them. Children need to learn how to understand, be understood, listen, use proper grammar, express feelings, feel for others, etc. Finding and making time to talk to our children is something that we neglect constantly. **Don't**. Focus on your family early and the returns will make you proud!!

When you are looking for a good time to talk to your children ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are your high and low energy times?
2. What are your child's high and low energy times?
3. What are the times when everyone is home?
4. What are the times when only one or two of the family are there?
5. Are there times when things are quiet or slow paced?

Once you've decided the answers to these questions ask yourself what the best approach would be with your child. Consider the following:

Good Times- dinner time; bath time; bed time; driving in the car.

Good Activities - taking a walk together; washing dishes together; looking at magazines or books together; playing a game or working a puzzle; sitting together and looking out the window.

Good Topics - what you did today; who you saw today; what you like and dislike; what you currently see and hear.

Bad times for chit-chat time

1. When either the parent or child is cranky.
2. When you are thinking about other things.
3. When you are rushed for time.
4. When watching television (unless you use the experience of mutual television watching to stimulate chit-chat times or topics for chit-chats)
5. When you need to correct your child.

6. When you feel the need to complain about money problems and you can't control yourself.

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Common Questions About Chit-Chat Time

1. Won't my child think it is strange if I just start having chit-chat time one day? How do I get started?

Tell your child that you want to make sure that you set aside a little time each day so that you can spend time really getting to know each other.

Explain that it may seem funny at first, but because you love each other it's bound to work.

2. What should I talk about? Are there things that should not be discussed?

Talk about what you are doing. Find out what she is doing. How things are at school. What does she think of her teacher this year? What does she think her favorite subject is going to be?

Talk about what you see on television or read in the newspaper. Let your child know how you react to what's going on in the world.

Encourage your child to express his or her opinions.

Talk about money - or the lack of it. Share your concerns but, as Dr. Harrison-Ross puts it, try not to burden your child. That's not the point of these sessions.

3. My child is too young to really carry on a conversation. Does that mean I must put off chit-chat time until the child is older?

A young child may not be much of a conservationist, but the child still needs your time.

Use the fifteen minutes to play with her. Cuddle her. Sing to her. Read her a story. Recite nursery rhymes with her.

This establishes the tradition of the child's private time with mother and father.

4. Chit-chat time sounds fine if you only have one child. What about families with several children?

It's hard, but each of your children need some of your concentrated attention. Do your best.

If mother and father (or grandmother) both devote themselves to finding the time, it may be possible for each parent to give ten minutes a day instead of fifteen.

Older children may need your concentrated attention less regularly than once a day. Perhaps every three days will do. As long as it is a regular time and a priority for both of you, you can still meet the goals of chit-chat time.

Also, chit-chat time does not always have to be with only one child at a time. As long as each child receives some individual attention, it's fine to have group chats or activities once in a while.

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Typical Behavior

Kinder Early/Years

SECOND YEAR

Runs well, no falling
Walks up and down stairs
Turns pages of book singly
Builds tower of 6-7 cubes
2-3 word sentences; jargon discarded
Names 3 objects; identifies 5 objects
Verbalizes toilet needs "consistently"
Pulls on simple garment

THIRD YEAR

Alternates feet going upstairs
Rides tricycle, using pedals
Imitates 3 cube bridge
Copies circle and imitates cross
Uses plurals
Gives sex and full name
Puts on shoes and unbuttons buttons

FOURTH YEAR

Walks downstairs alternating feet
Throws ball overhand
Draws man with 2 parts
Copies cross
Counts 3 objects with correct pointing
Names 1 or more colors correctly
Obeys 5 prepositional commands (on, under, in back, in front, beside)
Washes and dries face and hands; brushes teeth
Goes on errands outside home

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Social Education

Handout

"ALL I EVER REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN"

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the thing I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup, they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: **LOOK**. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and Love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all the whole world had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and clean up our own messes. And I still argue, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is - hold hands and stick together.

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Assignment: Do You Mind Sharing My Love?

Suppose that tomorrow your "steady" tells you the following: "You are a very special person to me, and I want to keep our relationship. However, I've just met someone else who is also special. I want to share my time and love with both of you, so that means I can spend time with you on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and see my new friend on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. We can spend Sundays together, all three of us. Of course, I don't want you to spend time with anyone else. You can use your extra time for schoolwork and your job. Just remember, I don't love you any less now."

- How would you feel about sharing your "steady" with someone else?
- How would you feel about the three of you spending time together?
- What would you do if you were in this situation?

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What to Do About Sibling Rivalry—Some Helpful Hints for Parents

The first thing to remember is that sibling rivalry usually cannot be eliminated; it can only be minimized. Other suggestions to help your child adjust during or shortly after the birth of a new baby are as follows:

- Tell your preschooler ahead of time if a new baby is coming into the family. A month is sufficient; nine months is too long for a child to wait.
- Help your preschooler play out his or her feelings about a new baby, using a sturdy, rubber baby doll, along with a bottle, some diapers, a crib, and a bassinet. Allow the child to express his or her feelings in whatever way he or she wants.
- Help the preschooler not to feel abandoned by the mother when she goes away to the hospital to have a new baby. Have the children come to the hospital with the father to bring the new family member home.
- Try to give your preschooler special love and attention.
- Understand that children may regress to infant behaviors (for example, crawling, bottle feeding, and so forth) for a while. They will get over these behaviors more quickly if they are allowed to act out their jealousy.
- Allow your children to express anger and jealousy toward the baby. Do not try to talk them out of these feelings. Allowing them to verbalize these feelings now may help them to work at the new feelings they are trying to accommodate.

These other hints may help while the children are growing up:

- Remember that sibling rivalry goes both ways from older to younger and younger to older.
- Each child has moments when she or he wishes that all of the other children in the family would disappear and that she or he would not have to share the attention of the mother and father.
- Try to spend some individual time with each child each day.
- Arrange to take along a friend for one or more of your children to help lessen rivalry and jealousy on trips, outings, or even vacations.
- Do not compare the children. Do not use one as a good or bad example for the other.
- Allow older children to help care for younger siblings, but do not give them too much responsibility.